

## **PLAYING STYLES OF TRADITIONAL TURKISH INSTRUMENT (BAGLAMA) ACCORDING TO REAGIONS IN TURKEY**

### **Turkish Music:**

Turkish Music can be investigated under the following titles: Folk Music, Traditional Art Music, Modern (Polyphonic) Turkish Music. (Aydın, 2003: 14)

1. **Folk Music:** Music type that also contain Middle Asia traditions, played with a mode called “makam” in Turkish and mostly built up by creators within the folk from todays Turkey who have not received music education (AnaBritannica, 1986: 270)
2. **Traditional Art Music:** Our traditional music that is defined as Traditional Art Music is a product of a syntesize developed by the effects of Ottoman culture, and local Anatolia cultures, and additional religion brotherhood resulting in alliance with neighbour Arabic countries and Iran cultures. The traditional art music, which has a unique sound system and is performed through composed or improvisation pieces that is called “taksim” in Turkish, can be separated in two groups as religious and non religious (Aydın, 2003: 14)
3. **Modern (Polyphonic) Turkish Music:** This is the name given to the polyphonic music trend which started to be established after the foundation of Turkish Republic with regard to the culture policy of Atatürk. This trend started with the foundation of Turkish Republic in 1923, by the help of the composers Cemal Reşit REY, Hasan Ferit ALNAR, Ulvi Cemal ERKİN, Ahmet Adnan SAYGUN, Necil Kazım AKSES, recalled with the name Turkish fives and who completed their education in Paris, Vienna, and Prague. They have been followed by 60 composers up to now. (Aydın, 2003: 14)

### **Turkish Folk Music:**

This is the traditional music type which depicts the emotions and thoughts of the folk by building up its own deep tradition along the history. With a pure, clear, and frankly expression it represents the general, shared understanding, life and admiration style, hopes, and longings of the public.

Like folk music of all countries, our folk music, as well, has been preserved by conveying it from generation to generation, and from ear to ear. Undoubtedly, the folk of Anatolia have managed to ensure the continuity of this music by mixing their amusement and art apprehension into their custom and traditions which have been filtered within centuries. It is mostly in the music form with words. Instrumental forms, on the other hand, are usually used in accompaniment of folk dances (Say, 1985: 577).

The leading two characteristics of Turkish folk music are that it is anonymous, and modal. Its main instruments are drum that is called "davul" in Turkish, "zurna" which is a traditional wind instrument, "baglama" the most common instrument of Turkish Folk Music, "kabak kemane" which is string instrument made of zucchini, "Karadeniz Kemençesi" that is small three-stringed instrument of Black Sea Region, "tar" which is played mostly in Kars with plectrum, another wind instruments "kaval" (similar to shepherd's pipe), "mey", and "sipsi" which is mostly played in Aegean Region, "tulum" (similar to bagpipe), "tef" (similar to tambourine), "koltuk davulu" which is a drum played under the arm, wooden spoon, cymbal, and clip with cymbal. Most of these instruments are not traditional rooted, they have entered our folk music within a duration (Say, 2002: 543)

The most important feature of Turkish Folk Music that makes it rich is its rhythm and style attribute. As much as the sounds of the folk song, these features that determine how it is sung also play an important role. So, these features determine the characteristic features that shift from region to region. It is understood that some melodies and style vary sharply belong to certain regions (Say, 1985:577)

The melodies of Turkish folk music vary according to the events experienced, the geographic region of action, and the theme. These differences can be seen among the regions, as well as, among the cities. Even some small towns have their own unique playing styles.

It is mentioned that in the roots of Turkish folk music generally exists an extension of Middle Asia traditions. Until 1930s the features of Turkish folk music have not been investigated in depth. Among the collected works completed before the Hungarian musicologist and composer Bartok, the field works carried out by Istanbul Conservatory Folklore Commission between 1927 and 1930 in Anatolia, and with the publication of these, the works of the first musicologists of Turkey Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal (1900-1961), and Rauf Yekta (1871- 1961) occupy a great place. In the international area, on the other hand, firstly in 1936, with the invitation of Ankara Folkhouse, Bartok came to Turkey and conducted research together with Ahmet Adnan Saygun, and the unknown ways of Turkish folk music

started to reveal. Another reason of Bartok's visit to Turkey was to examine Turkish Folk Music personally, especially to find out whether there was a relation between old Hungarian music and old Turkish Folk Music, and to make studies on penthatonism, which was very often on the agenda among the ethnomusicologists during those dates. Bartok came to Ankara and delivered three separate conferences, and following that, together with Saygun he did a short research in southeast Taurus Mountains. According to Bartok, results were so interesting. The structure of some of the melodies that he collected was exactly same with those of old Hungarian melodies. When he went back to Hungary he stated that he wanted to decode the secret of the relation between Hungarian and Turks who had the same sound structure.

In his letter to Saygun that he wrote in 1939, he stated that he wanted to leave Hungary and settle in Turkey and to continue to examine the Turkish folk music. However, this was not accepted by the times Ministry of National Education. Saygun comments on this by saying "we would have made a great progress in this field if it hadn't been rejected". As it is known, Bartok left Europe in the edge of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in 1940 and settled in Amerika, and died in 1945 (Aydın, 2003: 14)

Turkish Folk Music is investigated in two groups as "with words" and "without words" (instrumental). The folk music without words covers the melodies of all folk dances, and the folk music of all kinds with words forms the "folk songs" which is called "Türkü" in Turkish. "Türküs" are created by singing the folk poems with a melody. The word "türkü" has been formed by adding the Arabic affix "i" that means "with" to the end of the word "Turk". The only resource of the "Türküs" is average people's, in other words, the folk's longings. Since it is not important who the longing belongs to, the creator does not present his/her name. Although she/he gave his/her name, it would be forgotten, erased, and the folk song becomes folk's possession. Compared with the other traditional art types, which are individual, folk songs are mostly communal. The sorrow, love, passion, and longings of the folk find an echo in "Türküs" (Say, 2002:545)

The folk music with lyrics, in other words, "Türküs", have two other characteristics that they can be with beat or without beat.

1. In Folk Music with beat that in Turkish they are called "Kırk Havalır" are melodies that have certain beat and scale, and follow a certain rhythm.
2. In Folk Music without beat that they are called "Uzun Havalır" in Turkish: they are the melodies that have a certain scale, and are performed freely (recitative).

Although they are mostly performed without accompaniment, it is also observed that in some melodies they are performed with the accompaniment of baglama (Baglama is the most common instrument of Turkish Folk Music). "Uzun havas" that are mostly indigenous to East, Southeast, and Central Anatolia differ from region to region, and also according to the style performed (Salih Turhan, 92, 15)

### **Baglama:**

It is a stringed Turkish Folk Instrument which is used most broadly in our country. It is our oldest instrument the ancestor of which is known as "Kopuz" that has migrated from Middle Asia to Anatolia. Baglama is the middle sized kind that is mostly used among the baglama family. The word baglama which is used for approximately two hundred years also widely comprises all kinds of traditional stringed instruments. More specifically, baglama is the name given to the middle sized one of this family. Although these look similar in appearance, they show many differences regarding the length, voice pitch, string thickness, width, chest margins, neck length, bowl width, and sound colour (resonance) (Gedikli, 1999:72)

### **Parts of Baglama:**

Baglama is formed of a bowl, sound board, lower and upper bridges, string tying places, neck, and tuning pegs (Alim-Atalay, 2004:11)

The body part of baglama (the bowl) is manufactured in two ways either by carving or lamination. From among the hard trees like hornbeam, chestnut, plum tree, walnut tree, and elm that are used in carving and manufacturing of baglama, the best one is mulberry tree. Lamination baglama manufacturing, on the other hand, is processed by attaching the parts made of different kinds of trees, and producing the bowl. For the chest part (the lid), however, softer trees that have smoother grains like spruce, fir, and pine are used to produce nicer sound. It is especially minded that the wood used in the neck part be from hard and dry trees like in the bowl. For this reason, mostly white hornbeam, lemon tree, plum tree, juniper, and walnut tree are used (www.turkuler.com).

As for fret ligatures and frets, these are the heights on the neck that separate the frets, and are usually made of black nylon fishing line. Each gap between these heights is a fret.

Tuning pegs: These are the moveable spins to which the lines are tied and used to tune the baglama instrument. These are made of trees like boxwood, ebony, and alike. (Alim-Atalay, 2004:12).

The folk instruments that are comprised by baglama family are ranged from bigger to smaller as in the following:

**Divan Saz:** This is the biggest instrument of baglama family that makes the most basso sound of all because of the thick strings used. It was played in the meetings called Divan Council by Amorous (folk poets). It has 9 strings in groups of three. With its mystic sound it gains value mostly in uzun hava. Bowl size varies between 49-52 cm, and the gap between two bridges is 105-111 cm.

**Baglama:** This is the most widely known and played instrument of the family. Its chords might differ between 6-9 in groups of two or three. Bowl size varies between 39-44 cm, and the distance between two bridges is 94-100 cm.

**Cura Baglama:** This is bigger than cura, smaller than baglama. It is successful in performing energetic pieces of baglama. Bowl size varies between 30-34 cm, and the distance between two bridges is 64-77 cm.

**Cura:** This is the smallest one among the instruments of baglama family. It is mostly played in Zeybek performances. Bowl size varies between 23-28 cm, and the distance between two bridges is 50-55 cm. Additionally, nowadays "Basso Baglama" has also begun to be used. Rather than playing melodies, it is mostly for basso parties and rhythm. This instrument is also used as 3 and 4 stringed. ([www.turkuler.com](http://www.turkuler.com)).

## PLAYING STYLES IN BAGLAMA INSTRUMENT

Within its traditional structure, Turkish Folk Music carries local and regional characteristics. These regional characteristics are called "tavr" (style) in folk music, and it is the most efficient way of expression in baglama. Regional styles are a reflection of various specialities of human beings that live in a certain region stemming from their life styles and cultures. Regional styles, regarding their general characteristics, are exposition differences that have unique techniques and narration of melodies that develop within various tones and scales, and again, which have been created by processing different compositions and estimations. Regional styles, in baglama, are evaluated considering the different playing styles, various plectrum beats and tuning specialities that are done in various kinds. Regional styles, which form a quite rich technique accretion in baglama, are attention-grabbing especially with their different picking styles and rhythm structures (EKİCİ: 200).

Besides, when a style cannot be played with only one plectrum, second or third versions of that style appear. For instance, it is very hard to narrate

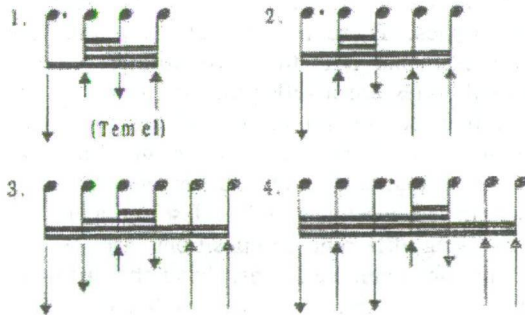
Zeibek style with only one plectrum. That's why, a plectrum kind is taken into consideration and zeibek style is formed with the things produced by it. Another important point required to perform the styles correctly is the tuning of the baglama. If the tuning is different this might cause the style to be performed not properly. For this reason, when the "Türkü" of a certain region is going to be performed, initially, the tuning and then the correct playing styles should be minded.

The styles used in performing the "Türkü" today are as in the following:

The printing of the styles on paper is made by showing the plectrum. These styles are shown as follows:

### 1. Zeibek Style:

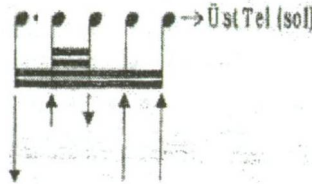
This is a Turkish Folk music style that accompanies a deep-seated folk dance which centres mostly in Aegean Region. Places where these dances are played more frequently are Aydın, Muğla, Çanakkale, Balıkesir, Manisa, Burdur, Denizli, İzmir, Uşak, and Kütahya. Zeibek is one of the main dances of our folk dances. Zeibek, which is played with slow or middle tempo, is performed with majestic appearance and impressive knee knock figures (Say, 1985: 535). Zeibek dances are performed with accompaniment of davul (drum) and zurna in open arenas, and with baglama in closed places. In dances usually two zurnas are used. One of the zurna plays the main melody, and the other plays only the main sound of the melody (CD 1,4,7) Zeibek style is shown by 4 different plectrum clusters, one of which is main.



### 2. Konya Style:

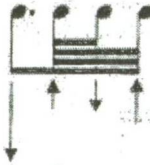
As in all regions, Konya also has its unique baglama playing style, folk songs, and dance performances. Most of Konya folk songs have been played and sung for spoon performances. The most significant

feature of Konya style is hooking the upper string G. It consists of hooking upwards the G string after a Zeibek plectrum. During the performance of this style, each cluster of musical notes or style is implemented, and this makes G sound to appear also in places where not needed. In order to avoid this, while hooking the upper string, if the sounds written on that string that can be taken with the 5<sup>th</sup> finger are actually taken with it, the folk song sounds can be ensured to be played more clearly. In this matter, the 5<sup>th</sup> finger plays an important role.



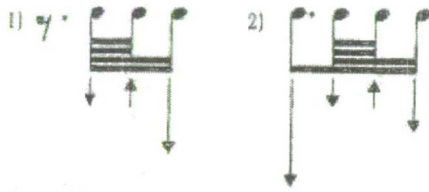
### 3. Silifke Style:

The perception is same with this in zeibek style. However, regarding the direction, visually it is exactly the opposite of zeibek. Because of the metronome fastness of Silifke region folk songs, it is usually performed by using the lower string. Silifke, which is one of the districts where spoon dances are performed very frequently, with regard to music, is the centre of Mersin province. The instruments used in the assistance of folk melodies and dances in the region are violin, cümbüş, bağlama, spoon, and koltuk davulu. While previously kabak kemane and zurna were used in the assistance of region melodies, later violin and clarinet have started to be used. Since violin has replaced kabak kemane, it is played by putting it on the knee instead of putting it on the shoulder.



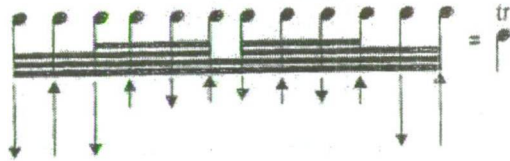
### 4. Azerbaijani Style:

In the plectrum of Azerbaijani style, it is usually performed by using the lower string. Although it is similar to Silifke style, it is different regarding the tempo of the beat. In the Azerbaijani plectrum, however, this is performed only in the lower string. Azerbaijani style is mostly seen in Kars, Ardahan, Iğdır regions.



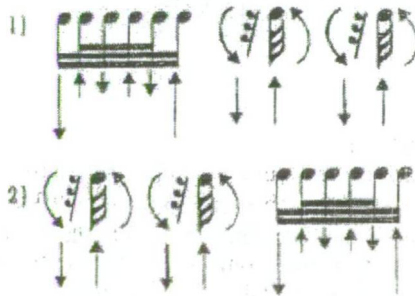
##### 5. Sürmeli Style (Yozgat Style) :

The most important feature of sürmeli style is that the sounds created by the gutturals of the ones singing the folk songs are reflected in baglama. And, this is possible only with trills in baglama. This style is consubstantiated with the folk song Yozgat Sürmelisi.



##### 6. Kayseri Style:

Kayseri style is played with sürmeli plectrum by drawing a circle over the chest of baglama with the right hand, with demisemiquaver notes before some sounds. The most important feature of Kayseri style, which is formed by playing some musical sentences with trills, and some with rests, is that the plectrum responds to play by drawing a circle.





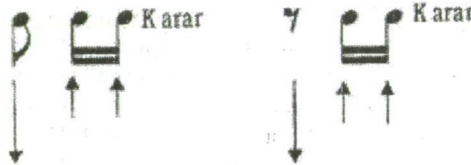
### 7. Black Sea Style:

The plectrum beats of this region are same in perceptual and visual sense. However, since the folk songs belonging to different regions have different perception, they have been named variously, although the plectrum beat is same. Sometimes, as in Kayseri style, the beat after the first plectrum can be played also with a rest. Nevertheless there is no circle drawing.



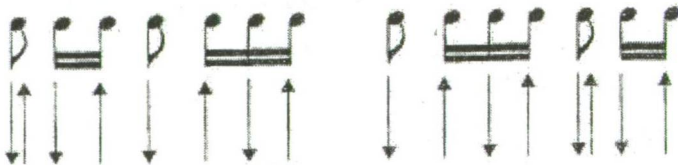
### 8. Ankara Style, Fidayda Style:

The most important feature of this style, which gets its name from the folk song Fidayda, is that the tonic sound is intended to be made as loud as possible. Sometimes this sound can be replaced with a rest. The following plectrums, however, are again in attempt to make the tonic sound as loud as possible.



### 9. Teke Style:

The most important feature of Teke style is that the trio set starts from the lower towards upper.



As it can be noticed, the styles used today are called with the name of the region or with a folk song sung in the region. (As in Fidayda Style) As mentioned above, the differences among styles are rather visual than sensorial. And, these style differences make one of the most significant richness of our folk music. Another important matter during the implication of the styles is the appropriate tuning (accord) of the style to be played. If the tuning of baglama does not match the characteristics of the style to be played, the style intended to be performed loses its sense. For instance, in order to realize Ankara style, the best accord necessary to perform it is Fidayda tuning. To perform "Türküs" properly, knowing regional styles knowing the tuning of baglama in every style and also very well is a must. ([www.turkuler.com](http://www.turkuler.com))

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